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SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN A/S TOM SHANNON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ARIAS ON MEDIATION

Classified By: Classified by Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b & d)

¶1. (C) President Arias called the Ambassador to inquire as to the status of his efforts to soften the position of the de facto regime. The Ambassador informed him that the meeting with regime leadership was scheduled for today at 3pm. The Ambassador promised Arias that he would brief him after the meeting.

¶2. (C) Arias told the Ambassador that mediation talks on July 9-10 in San Jose had gone as well as could be expected under the circumstances. He confirmed he had had separate meetings with President Zelaya and de facto regime President Roberto Michelett, but was not able to bring the two together.

¶3. (C) Arias said the work of the commissions had gone well after a slow start. He noted that the Micheletti team argued that June 28 was not a coup, while Zelaya team said there was no doubt it was a coup. Arias told both sides that June 28 was a coup for the entire world -- and stressed that the Micheletti team needed to understand this. Arias said he told both delegations that he was involved in the mediation process based on requests for his involvement from both sides in the Honduran conflict. If that changed he would pull out. Arias said he had strong support from Insulza, the U.S. and Mexico.

¶4. (C) Arias complained about Chavez's effort to scuttle his mediation initiative. Arias noted that Chavez was directly attacking President Obama and Secretary Clinton and saying that his mediation effort was an American trick. Arias reported that Chavez was seeking to convene the Rio Group and bring down his effort. He said Chavez called Calderon to weaken support for his mediation. Arias said we needed to put pressure on Micheletti. Arias and the Ambassador agreed that Zelaya was comfortable coming back as a lame duck and would accept most terms in the negotiation including amnesty, a national unity government and no Fourth Urn. The Ambassador and Arias also agreed that Chavez was hurting Zelaya's cause. Chavez's rhetoric was polarizing the US Congress along ideological grounds. This would hurt Zelaya since Republicans would lean towards the Micheletti position. Arias stressed that we needed to pull Zelaya away from Chavez.
LLORENS